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and not by lavish expenditure of a few individuals—is as essential to the life of a nation as is economy to the existence or the credit of a firm or individual. Also you will agree with me that the figures representing the business of a nation, firm or individual, during these abnormal times, should not be taken into consideration or into estimation as the normal resources on which such states or individuals may base their present estimates for future years.

The independence of a nation as the independence of an individual is measured by income, expenditure and indebtedness. Our credit has been created by a frugality of living and a sacrifice of the individual to the state in order that the state, the nation and the individual may survive. We are endeavoring to conserve that credit so as to insure our independence. At the same time we are expending, and we are ready to expend funds drawn from a frugal people in a cause which means to us the same as it means to you—a free independent life for the nation and for the individual.

FOOD FOR FRANCE AND ITS PUBLIC CONTROL

BY FRANCOIS MONOD,

“Chef de Cabinet to the French High Commissioner in the United States.

Without attempting to present a complete and authoritative review of the conditions prevailing in France as regards the food question, I think it may be worth while to state here at least some of the main facts or figures evidencing the difficulties with which France has had and is having to contend during the war in order to supply the needs of her civilian population and of her armies.

Emphasizing first the decrease of production and the increase in prices, I will thereafter outline the main measures taken in France in order either to make up for the shortage of agricultural workers or to regulate consumption, to remedy the deficiency of production and to provide a sufficiency of the essential foodstuffs.

I. SHORTAGE OF AGRICULTURAL HANDWORK AND DEFICIT OF NATIVE PRODUCTION

1. In France during the war the whole food situation has been controlled by an extensive and critical shortage of agricultural handwork. Obvious are the reasons accounting for that main fact of the situation. Seven million men up to the age of forty-eight years have been taken in France for army service. It would be difficult to overstate the consequences of such a wholesale mobilization of our manhood amongst a nation which has been for centuries and which is still foremost a nation of agriculturists, of food producers. Though accurate statistical data are not easily procurable, I think that a round figure and safe estimate of the number of agriculturists in the French army during the war would not prove to be under four or five million men. This includes without exception all the younger and stronger male peasantry.

Then there is to be taken into account the invasion and long detention of a large part of northern France by the Germans which means the loss, during the war, up to the present day, of some of our best managed and most productive wheat growing districts, and the enforced employment of their agricultural resources and handwork for the benefit of Germany.

South of the invaded districts along the front in the "army zone," that a large acreage of agricultural soil is lying uncultivated and idle is another fact not to be overlooked. Wheat is not grown on a shell-torn ground and the main crops of that long belt from the French Flanders to the south part of the Vosges, to the border of Switzerland, are barbed wire. The varying breadth of that belt, extending far behind the actual "no man's land," is easily several miles.

Then there is to be mentioned last, a deficiency of the essential fertilizers all over France. The import of nitrates is cut short by the growing contraction of available tonnage and by the scarcity of shipping from the far distant sources of supply in Chile.

2. A heavy decrease of production has unavoidably been following such unsatisfactory conditions of cultivation. Wheat has ever been the staple food of France. Amongst all classes over the country bread is the main article of consumption, the actual

basis of the French nation's feeding, even more so especially in the case of our peasants, that is to say of the majority of the nation with whom bread actually takes to the largest extent the place of meat as a foodstuff.

In peace times the wheat production of France was about equal to our consumption, sometimes slightly inferior to our needs, sometimes slightly superior and allowing a thin margin of surplus. This meant a crop of about 90,000,000 French cwt.¹ on the average. Since the war, production decreased to:

82,000,000 French cwt. in 1914
 75,000,000 French cwt. in 1915
 58,000,000 French cwt. in 1916.
 38,000,000 French cwt. in 1917 (estimate)

Thus, compared with the normal production, the present wheat production of France indicates a decrease of *over 50 per cent* in the native supply of the staple food.

As regards *meat* the unavoidable depletion of our resources in livestock has been made much heavier by the huge needs of the army. In the army the meat consumption per head amounts to about 400 "grammes," a little less than one English pound, a day. This means an exceedingly heavy additional burden on our resources in livestock on account not only of the tremendous consumption of meat at such a rate in an army of several million men, but on account of the fact that the peasants, contributing the largest part of the army's establishment are, as already stated, consuming very little meat in peace time.

In round figures the decrease of the livestock in France since the end of 1913 runs as follows:

End 1913 14,787,000 bovine species
 End 1913 16,138,000 ovine species
 End 1913 7,035,000 pigs
 End 1916 12,341,000 bovine species
 End 1916 10,845,000 ovine species
 End 1916 4,361,000 pigs

meaning thus, at the end of 1916, a decrease of about:

2,440,000 bovine species
 5,700,000 ovine species
 2,700,000 pigs

¹ French cwt. = 220 English pounds.

II. INCREASE IN THE PRICES OF FOODSTUFFS

1. The increase in price for *wheat* has been balancing almost exactly the decrease in production.

Average Price of Native Wheat

Before the war	22 francs per French cwt.
1914	30 francs per French cwt.
1915	36 francs per French cwt.
1916	50 francs per French cwt.

which means in 1916 an increase of *over 50 per cent.*

2. The price of meat has been rising in a similar proportion and an *increase of circa 50 per cent* may safely be stated as an index for the rising in the prices of *all the main foodstuffs.*

3. The price of *bread* though shows a comparatively small increase. The peacetime price was 35–40 centimes per kilogram on the average; the war price did not rise over 50 centimes. The explanation of such a paradoxical fact is that the price of bread was artificially and deliberately kept down by the government burdening public finances with a heavy extra war burden. On account of the paramount importance of the question of bread, the French government adopted the policy of paying from public moneys the difference between the prices corresponding to the actual market quotations of wheat and the price of bread as stated above (50 centimes). Thus a steady, abnormal and uncontrollable increase of wages amongst the community at large and other undesirable results which would have followed as regards the price of bread were avoided.

III. SKETCH OF THE PUBLIC MEASURES TAKEN TO CONTROL THE FOOD SITUATION

Important public measures have been taken to make up for the deficiency of agricultural handwork, to regulate or to lessen consumption and to provide supplies.

1. All over France private initiative amongst the agricultural community did wonders in order to keep the production as large as possible. All the people who were not in the army, the old men, the women, the boys under military age displayed great physical and moral courage in taking, as regards agricultural work, the place of the millions of men at the front. They directed the work—

many women have themselves been running even large-sized farms during the war—or they spent themselves tirelessly in the manual work involved by the daily business of farming; they took care of the cattle, of the horses; they performed ably the ploughing, seeding, harvesting operations.

Under such trying conditions they went on with the cultivation of the fields as far as possible even in the zone behind the actual front, many times in shelled districts. Near villages located behind the trench line I have often seen women or old men, bent in two, weeding or hoeing without taking notice of the casual landing of shells in the near fields.

2. This strenuous endeavor has been helped and stimulated by special organizations created under the authority of the Ministry of Agriculture.

Under the supervision of the communal authorities and with the help of the local agents of the Ministry of Agriculture, a special local coöperation was organized in the rural townships, bringing about a local pooling of agricultural resources of machinery, draught horses, seeds and of handwork to some extent.

Special military measures, besides, were taken for the same purpose. A certain amount of supplementary agricultural handwork was provided in two ways: first, by granting, as far as possible long furloughs to soldiers of the older "classes," and second, of late, by the release of the 1889 and 1890 "classes," aged forty-seven and forty-eight years. Another kind of military coöperation was extended in the army zone itself in the villages located behind the line, by the temporary use of smaller groups of soldiers and of army horses in agricultural work, helping the peasants on the spot and reclaiming part of the fields left idle since the war began.

Then the German army herself contributed another welcome addition of handwork—mobile squads of German prisoners put at the disposal of many of our rural communities have been fairly extensively employed by our peasants in various districts. They were well treated and well fed and the results proved satisfactory. Provided they are kept under a sufficiently strict military discipline, the German prisoners are submissive and willing to work.

Last, another addition of hands was offered by importing natives volunteering from Algeria. The Kabyles, one of the main

racés of French Northern Africa, are sedentary peasants. For months squads of turbaned Kabyles have been seen with us, employed not only as street sweepers in Paris, but in several rural districts, mixing unexpectedly as agricultural laborers with the old peasantry of France.

3. So much as regards handwork and cultivation. Regarding the regulation of consumption and the victualling, the most important public provision has been the buying of all wheat imports by the French government. This resulted in regulating automatically the prices of the native wheat and in preventing speculation in the interior market.

Since December, 1916, this organization has been extended and completed by the creation of a national Ministry of Supplies (Ministère du Ravitaillement).

4. A series of food laws have been further enacted:

a. Increase of the proportion of the wheat grain used in the bolting for the making of flour.

b. Institution of two meatless days per week and reduction of the menu of meals in hotels and restaurants to three courses only.

c. Institution of sugar cards reducing, monthly, the sugar consumption to 750 grammes, and later to 400 grammes per head.

Besides food laws proper, there ought still to be mentioned in connection with them the institution of coal cards regulating the supply of coal for home consumption. This democratic provision is preventing the well-to-do from buying at high prices, thereby increasing the general retail market price for the larger part of the population.

IV. INTERALLIED MEASURES

The carrying out of these national measures has been seconded by a general interallied understanding. An interallied "wheat executive" (December, 1916) and recently a "meats and fats executive" have been appointed by France, Great Britain and Italy, thereby providing an interallied buying and apportionment of imported supplies.

V. AMERICAN COÖPERATION

The aims and results of the food control organized in the United States are well known. The allies are concerned by the

national husbanding of American resources and by the controlling of food exports. After provisions are made for the national consumption the available surplus is kept for supplying the needs of the allies.

This American cooperation has been meeting with a very special appreciation in France as regards the supplies provided in the past and in the present to hundreds of thousands of our unfortunate countrymen who are still enslaved under German bondage and oppression in northern France. Those people have been and are under much worse conditions than the Belgians and their pitiful, exceedingly critical situation at present is a matter of grave anxiety. If they have not literally starved, if they have not died out, this was due entirely to the Belgian Relief Commission operating in northern France.

From this standpoint no adequate tribute could be paid to the former Director of the Commission of Belgian Relief, to the present United States Food Controller, Mr. Herbert Hoover, to his genius for organization, to the generous and tireless activities of Mr. Hoover and of his staff, to their firmness in dealing with German authorities in invaded territories and in upholding American rights for the benefit of our countrymen. Amongst many American names forever dear to us, the name of Mr. Hoover will ever be remembered by the French nation with a deep and affectionate gratitude.

VI. CONCLUSION

The conclusion to be derived from this review of the food situation in France is plain enough. In her sustenance, France has been depending upon imports in an increasing way. Upon an adequate supply of foodstuffs as well as of coal, and of the other main war supply—steel—depends in the present and in the near future the further resistance of our civilian population and the sustenance of our armies, who, after having borne the main brunt of the fight for three years, are still defending about three-quarters of the western front and acting as the main rampart of the allied cause.

Considering the main food supply—wheat—only the needs of France are emphasized by the present condition of crops. Taking 100 as indexing a very good crop, while the crop of 1916

winter wheat was not classed higher than 64, a very poor crop is indicated by this year's probable index 56.²

Needless to say an increase in the supply of foodstuffs means finally an increase of the tonnage available for imports in France. For France thus, from the point of view of American coöperation, the supply of tonnage stands out as the vital issue.

THE FOOD PROBLEM OF GREAT BRITAIN; THE SHIPPING PROBLEM OF THE WORLD

BY ARTHUR POLLEN, Esq.,

London, England.

I can only direct your attention to one or two salient and really rather startling facts. Before the war we used to import 13,000,000 tons of food, a shade more than one-quarter of our total imports measured by weight. We grew at home about one-fifth of the wheat we required and about one-half the country's consumption of beef, mutton, bacon, etc. Within the past six months great efforts have been made for an organized reduction in the consumption of food and an organized increase in its production. The results are unexpectedly satisfactory. Our consumption of bread is reduced by 25 per cent on the average, and by more in some districts. Further economies undoubtedly can be made. The

²The decrease of the 1917 crops compared to the 1916 ones is noticeable for all cereals. Reports based on unpublished official estimates give the following figures for 1917:

	<i>Metric tons</i>
Wheat	3,950,000
Spelt	90,000
Rye	700,000
Barley	700,000
Oats	3,500,000

Corresponding figures for 1916 were in round figures:

	<i>Metric tons</i>
Wheat	5,841,000
Spelt	111,000
Rye	911,000
Barley	857,000
Oats	4,127,000